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Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 19 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of statements delivered by the Permanent Representatives of the Russian Federation to the United Nations and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, together with aides-memoires on the situation surrounding the incident in Salisbury, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on 4 March 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 99 (l), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

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Annex I to the letter dated 19 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and Russian]

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STATEMENT

by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations V. A. Nebenzia at UN Security Council meeting on the letter issued by UK dated 13 March 2018

18 April 2018

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

We are very thankful to the British side which organized today's briefing. We have been impatiently awaiting it. However, to our regret, we did not hear anything new today.

When I listen to some of my colleagues, I have the impression that this is no longer "Alice in Wonderland" but rather "Alice Through the Looking Glass". Our western colleagues are not at all interested in discovering the truth and not only in this issue. They do not listen to us and do not want to hear our arguments. We have a saying in Russian which has the following English equivalent: "We are discussing apples and oranges with them".

Today we heard the same lies that the UK has been repeatedly using to mislead international community. It is claimed that the UK has not received answers to the questions which it had posed to us. I would like to remind once again that these "questions" where contained in the famous 24-hour ultimatum which in a sense waters down to only one question: "Why did you do it?" Nevertheless, some British allies with stubbornness which could be better displayed elsewhere echo London: "You need to answer British questions and cooperate with the UK". Maybe you have some other questions which we lack, could you share them with us since the UK does not send us any additional questions. We would be very grateful to you.

We hear the same set of unproven accusations allegedly supported now by the OPCW authority. I will tell you blankly — the OPCW report contains nothing that could help the British side prove its fake claims about Russian involvement in the Salisbury incident. There is one most important thing that the British side was so eager to see there but failed — the conclusion that the substance used in Salisbury had been produced by Russia. On the contrary, the express analysis by OPCW only confirms that such a substance could have been produced by any laboratory that has necessary equipment. The fact is that in order to make a comparative analysis one needs to possess the specimen standard of this toxic substance. Such kind of laboratories exist on British soil (the famous Porton-Down) as well as in the US and in a number of other countries. The formula of this substance is well-known since 1998 when it was included into the data base of the US National Institute of Standards by the Edgewood Center for Defense Studies of the US Army. Moreover, if you run a search of the key word "Novichok" at Google Patents in the web, you will find more than 140 patents issued in the US alone, related to the use of this toxic substance and protection from it.

One month and two weeks have passed since the Salisbury incident on 4 March but there are more and more gaps and inconsistencies in this story which is all very airy-fairy. On the contrary, the number of such holes only multiplies with amazing speed. We are not surprised by the line of action chosen by London. Early today at the session of OPCW Executive Committee the British Representative who was as usually basing his statement on lies and disinformation about motives, methods and means used by Russia declared once again: "Russia has a proven record of conducting state-sponsored assassinations". I have a question: proven by whom? Naturally, this was followed by numerous references to the "Litvinenko case" supported by arguments relying on the "new notion" of the British legal system: "President Putin probably approved it", "The Russian state may have been involved", "The Russian state may have sponsored", "There have been numerous suspected Russian state-sponsored attacks".

Ladies and gentlemen,

Everything that we see and hear today is a kind of déjà vu.

We have already been through this in the case of Alexander Litvinenko's poisoning — complete lack of transparency by the British side which until now hides any documented information that could help to establish the whole picture of what has happened to Mr. Litvinenko. To those who are unaware about the details I will say that this information was simply classified by the UK.

The OPCW Technical Assistance Group's report of 12 April was no exception from London's "modus operandi". In the declassified Executive summary of the report which amounts to 1,5 pages the British side not only forbade the OPCW experts to mention what kind of technical assistance was requested by them, but also to even call by name the toxic chemical identified by Porton-Down. London chose to hide this information in the classified part of the report. If it became subject of discussion in the open format of the Council meeting that would have constituted a breach of the OPCW confidentiality rules. It is obvious for us why it was done.

Okay, since the British side deprives Members of the Council of their right to discuss the provisions chosen by London to be included in the substantive part of the report let's discuss things that were not included there. Among them, first of all, any mentioning of the Russian Federation which fully corresponds to the conclusions earlier disclosed by Porton-Down. There is not a slightest mentioning of the most important information about how Sergei and Yulia Skripal as well as Nicolas Bailey were affected. There is equally no indication about their treatment records and methods.

You will not find there any explanations of how the toxic chemical in question which if we believe its alleged inventor Mr. Mirzayanov "is highly unstable in a humid environment" could be discovered in high concentration almost three weeks after the incident? There is not a single word that would explain why this substance which is claimed to be ten times more powerful than "VX" affected some of the victims only after seven hours from the moment of the incident while the others got affected immediately? Maybe Mr. Mirzayanov and Porton-Down speak about different toxic chemecals?

Besides, you will not find there any slightest logical explanation of why a non-decomposed toxic chemical element identified by Porton-Down could be found in the blood sample of one of the affected persons that was collected 18 days after she was exposed. Strangely enough the specimen of another victim that was more seriously poisoned were different. Such a situation is not only strange for nerve agents but also could indicate at the same time that highly likely the toxic chemical element discovered by Porton-Down had been injected in the blood of the victim who was in

an artificial coma before the taking of the sample in question and hence it did not have enough time to react at biochemical level.

One very important question comes to my mind in this regard. On 5 April after I quoted British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson on Porton-Down possessing substance "A-234", the Permanent Representative of Great Britain replied that the UK allegedly is entitled to conduct such tests for defensive purposes. Does it imply that respected experts from Porton-Down tested and possess this and other toxic chemical elements which are not included in relevant CWC Schedules? I believe that it is high time for Porton-Down experts, in the framework of the work on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Director-General of the OPCW Technical Secretariat report to the 4th Review Conference, to share with the scientific world their studies of the substance "A-234" and probably other toxic chemicals which represent a threat for the objectives of the CWC conducted for defensive purposes. But let's not dream in vain — the line of conduct chosen by the UK in the context of the Salisbury incident clearly indicates that this will never be done. The UK and its allies are simply not interested in a professional discussion. As for professional chemists and experts, they continue to question the official British version stronger and stronger with every day.

Mr. Chairman,

To our regret, we cannot help posing questions in the light of the very loose interpretation of the CWC by London. For instance, the British side always refers to the fact that it conducts its investigation in accordance with Para. 1 of Article VII of CWC. We could have agreed with the merit of this reference if only such an investigation targeted physical and legal persons within the British jurisdiction which is not the case. I believe it is not necessary to make clear that Russia does not fall within the UK jurisdiction. Therefore, we ask the British side to clarify, whether the declarations by the Downing Street on the alleged involvement of Russia in the Salisbury incident represent an attempt to exercise political pressure on the detectives or it is a final conclusion of the Scotland-Yard investigation. Or is this normal for the British legal system when the government first names the culprits and the detectives after that tailor their investigation to this conclusion?

I want to underline once again — any doubts as to the implementation in good faith of a certain Member State of its obligations under the CWC should be regulated by its Article IX. They must be regulated in such a way — we do not know any other meaning of the words "shall" and "should". We would be grateful to English native speakers for their opinion in what cases these words can describe a non-obligatory action. This would be highly useful for our further practical work in the Council.

Since our numerous appeals to London to start cooperation stipulated by Article IX, as well as requests by the Office of the General Prosecutor of Russia on legal assistance in criminal cases put forward in accordance with Para. 2 of Article VII are ignored, we do not have any other solution but to initiate ourselves a request foreseen by Para. 2 of Article IX containing a number of questions to the UK on the Salisbury incident on 4 March. A corresponding Note Verbale was sent to the British side by Russian Representation in the Hague through the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

We are therefore convinced that in order to reinforce the CWC the Director-General of the OPCW Technical Secretariat has to prepare and introduce at the next meeting of the OPCW Executive Council in accordance with Para. 5 of Article XV of CWC a draft decision which would change the annex on chemical substances lists. Such a decision would allow not only to officially classify the substance identified by Porton-Down as a chemical warfare agent but also to place it and its precursors under systematic control of OPCW. That is exactly the step that should have been taken a long time ago by those countries who, as we discovered today, happened to have all

the necessary data for such a measure including the specimen of this toxic chemical, instead of using the fora of the OPCW and the Security Council for disseminating their unfounded accusations that Russia allegedly breaches its obligations under the CWC.

Mr. Chairman,

The disinformation campaign which resembles more a war started by the British authorities against Russia in connection with the so-called "Skripal case" is not a secret to anybody. The UK ignores norms of international law and law in general, principles and customs of diplomacy, common sense and even simple politeness. Against the background of meaningful silence by the British competent authorities on the essence of the case as well as abundant declarations and allegations of a political nature that were targeted against Russia since the very beginning, there are more and more new versions of what has happened highlighting important discrepancies, claims and blatant disinformation which London does not even try to refute. It is all about sensations. Then those who behave like this count that against the background of numerous unfounded accusations and references to highly esteemed organizations like the OPCW that allegedly "completely confirmed the conclusions of the British side about Russian involvement" (which as I would like to stress once again is a complete lie) third countries and public opinion will not try to study themselves the peculiarities of chemical analysis and numerous inconsistencies of the voiced allegations. Winston Churchill used to say that there is no public opinion but only published opinion. The British side and their allies have no problems with multiplying their fake allegations in the media.

The British side has so far posed only two questions to us. In our turn, we have posed 47 questions to them. Here they are. We have received partial answers only to two of them. There are no answers to the questions that we posed during the previous meeting of the Council on this issue on 5 April and we have more questions to come. We promised you that we will not let it go.

In order to familiarize you with the scientific and factual sides of the matter we will distribute separately statements of Russian representatives at the 59th session of OPCW as well as with chronological list of events composed by our Embassy in London. This statement will also be sent to you later.

The British authorities on the sly are busy with systematic destruction of evidence and proof. The Skripals' pets have been killed without any blood samples taken. Places visited by the Skripals are being "cleaned up": the bar, the restaurant, the bench, soil in the park, etc. At the same time common people continue to live in Salisbury as if nothing happened. Yulia Skripal is kept in an unknown location. There is no consular access to this Russian citizen. I would like to remind that nobody has seen either Yulia or Sergei Skripal since 4 March. And this despite the fact that these two Russian citizens became subjects of a crime — an attempted murder with distinctive signs of a terrorist act.

I would like to reiterate once again our principal position — we will not accept the results of any British or international investigations without being admitted to all the materials, including criminal investigation data or full technical laboratory reports, without being granted the right of consular access to Russian citizens as well as, which is the most important, without direct participation of Russian experts in all the procedures connected with the clarification of what happened in Salisbury on 4 March.

There is only one thing that we do not doubt at this stage. London continues to keep secret information that is critical to establish the truth and rejects any transparency on this matter.

One can mention once again the British Embassy in Moscow which has recently communicated the following sensational information which was later repeated by British representatives to the OPCW and the UN:

1. In the course of last 10 years Russia has been producing and accumulating quantities of "Novichok".

2. Russia conducted tests on how to use nerve agents for assassinations.

3. Starting with 2013 Russian intelligent services were interested in Sergei Skripal.

This is so genial! I applaud you, ladies and gentlemen.

Coming back to the letter by Permanent Representative of the UK to the UN that was distributed today among others to the permanent members of the Security Council. As usual, this document is abundant with lies, unfounded claims and slender, composed with "highly likely", "may have been", "suspected". The United Kingdom took the courage to judge our chemical declaration to OPCW as well as discuss the methods of work used by our special services. But this time our British colleagues went even further. They directly blamed President Putin of being personally involved in the chemical weapons program. Without metaphors or links and without using "highly likely". I was always amused and surprised by very unrealistic beliefs of our British colleagues and not only them in the way the Russian system of power works. London is likely to believe that the Russian President's hobby is to move forward a chemical weapons program in his spare time. I am not sure whether in London or in the British representation here you realize that in such a way a redline of decency and acceptable behavior is being crossed. I believe we need to thank our President for being very restrained.

Why on Earth do you need all this?

The answers are blatantly obvious.

This is an attempt to demonize Russia in general and to question its legitimacy at the international arena. I was right to say that incidents in Salisbury and Syrian Douma are interlinked. First of all, because these are two provocations, secondly, because they are both claimed to be linked to Russia.

This dirty anti-Russian provocation is aimed at deepening of the divide between Russia and the EU — a scenario favoured by the UK on the eve of Brexit.

And that is all I can say.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, let me quote again some classical literature. This time it will be William Shakespeare who wrote in his play "King Henry VI" that "suspicion always haunts the guilty mind". If so please take the effort to wrap your "suspicions" in some beautiful paper. Otherwise, they seem not convincing. I even feel sorry for you.

We will be impatiently looking forward to the continuation of these thrilling series. In case the British side hesitates to make public without delay of any new information or sensational "discoveries" similar to what I was referring today, we reserve the right to ask to convene such a meeting ourselves.

It is wrong to believe that you will succeed in protecting yourselves by the toxic fake wall of lies and allegations. The story does not end with technical assistance to the OPCW mission. We will continue to press you for the facts.

The whole case is undoubtedly toxic. You managed to stuff it with toxic lies. There is one thing that we see eye to eye with you. There should be accountability in this case. Those responsible for this provocation must be punished.

Annex II to the letter dated 19 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Russian]

Statement by the Head of the Russian delegation and Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Ambassador A.V. Shulgin, at the fifty-ninth session of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me start by quoting the great thinker, Martin Luther: "A lie is like a snowball: the further you roll it the bigger it becomes."

This wise dictum is completely applicable to politics. If you embark on the path of deceit, you are compelled to lie again and again, invent explanations for inconsistencies and engage in disinformation and deception. Out of desperation, you use every trick in the book to cover up the lie and conceal the truth.

Great Britain now finds itself on this slippery slope. We can see a clear example of all this in the so-called "Skripal case" that has been concocted by the British authorities: this thinly veiled act of anti-Russian provocation, backed by an unprecedented propaganda campaign, has been taken up by a group of countries and has culminated in an unprecedented expulsion of diplomats on some spurious pretext. However, let us not take this group to represent the international community — far from it.

It has already been one month since the British Prime Minister Theresa May made extremely serious accusations against Russia regarding its alleged use of chemical weapons. We have been waiting patiently for explanations, trusting that our British colleagues would eventually support their strident statements with some kind of at least remotely intelligible facts. We have repeatedly offered to work collaboratively with them to investigate the events in Salisbury and have sent requests for information. In reply, we have received haughty and arrogant statements to the effect that Russia should confess to the crime.

Britain continues to pile on completely unsubstantiated charges, trotting out ever new, and often incongruous, versions of what happened. British politicians and officials cannot help but continue to pour out more torrents of lies. London is sabotaging any attempts to work with Russian experts to conduct a truly objective investigation of the incident in Salisbury. Everything is shrouded in secrecy and the authorities are claiming that they are conducting their own investigation. And yet, the "culprits" have already been named.

It is clear why this is being done: the British are seeking at all costs to prevent a true picture of the event from emerging and to hide all evidence that might show them in their true colours. In short, they are playing for time. Indeed, as time goes by, it will become more complicated to make sense of what really happened (or did not happen) in Salisbury.

Lies always fear the truth because truth is the most formidable weapon against them. Let us therefore consider the hard facts that demonstrate how shamelessly and

clumsily the British Government has been spreading allegations about the Skripal case.

Lie No. 1

Russia will not answer legitimate British questions communicated on 12 March 2018 to the Russian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Alexander Yakovenko (this has been repeated like a mantra by some of Britain's allies).

I have to remind you that Britain gave us the option of admitting to one of two versions that it had concocted: either that the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal was a deliberate act by Russia, or that Russia has lost control of the arsenal of toxic agents that it allegedly possesses. Despite the brazenness of this ultimatum, we did not ignore it, but immediately offered an unequivocal response: Russia has nothing to do with the chemical incident in Salisbury. Great Britain has not asked us any other questions.

Lie No. 2

Britain is acting in strict compliance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

The facts indicate quite the opposite. Under article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention, States parties should hold bilateral consultations on any disputed issues. We can see that Great Britain has actually neglected to meet this provision and continues to refuse to interact with us. As for the aforementioned British ultimatum conveyed through the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, there is no way that it can be seen as "an offer of cooperation" in the sense of the Convention or as "a request for legal assistance".

For our part, on 13 April we sent a communication regarding article IX, paragraph 2, to Britain through the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) with a list of legitimate questions that we have about the Skripal case. We acted strictly in accordance with the Convention and expected our partners in London to do the same. As yet there has been no response. Great Britain seems to be ignoring the Convention and does not wish to act in accordance with its provisions.

We have also seen that London has invented a new way of working: independent verification of British findings by the OPCW Technical Secretariat. Allow me to stress: this is not in the Convention. It is a British invention. Instead of steadfastly following the provisions of the Convention, Great Britain is trying to pull the wool over everyone's eyes.

Lie No. 3

Russia refuses to cooperate to establish the truth.

In fact, the very opposite is the case. Russia is extremely interested — perhaps even more than any other country — in an honest, open and unbiased investigation of the incident in Salisbury. We have repeatedly offered, requested and demanded cooperation from Britain in the investigation. We have submitted a draft resolution for consideration at the fifty-seventh extraordinary session of the OPCW Executive Council, calling on Russia and Great Britain to establish such cooperation, with the involvement of the Technical Secretariat. We stated at that time and now confirm that we are ready to cooperate with OPCW and within its framework.

Unfortunately, all our efforts have come up against the brick wall of London's complete unwillingness to cooperate.

Lie No. 4

The British claim that Russia is continuously changing its version of the chemical incident in Salisbury in a bid to deflect a barrage of criticism for its alleged use of chemical weapons in British territory.

In reality, this is what Britain is doing by having its supposedly independent media introduce an infinite number of versions: poison in a suitcase, on a door handle, in a buckwheat package, in a restaurant, in a bunch of flowers, in a car ventilation system, in perfume, and so on.

Lie No. 5

The Russian leadership has allegedly declared that eliminating traitors abroad is the official policy of the Russian Federation.

This is slander and utter nonsense. They should indicate where they saw this. The British are clearly unable to give a single example of any such statement because the Russian leadership has never said anything like it.

Lie No. 6

After testing samples taken from the Skripal father and daughter, the conclusions of Technical Secretariat experts have confirmed that the Skripals were poisoned using a substance belonging to the Novichok class of agents.

Our military experts are prepared to share their assessments of the contents of the Technical Secretariat report on the findings of its group of experts in Great Britain.

For now I will say just one thing: the claim that the Technical Secretariat has confirmed that the chemical itself points to its Russian origin is an outright lie. Not a word is mentioned about Novichok in the report and the Convention does not refer to any such notion. Nor is there any confirmation in the Technical Secretariat's report of a "Russian trace" in the chemical substance found in Salisbury.

Nevertheless, the British authorities immediately leaked "fake news" to the global media suggesting that OPCW had confirmed that the Skripals had been poisoned by Novichok, which was allegedly produced only in the USSR and Russia, and that Moscow was therefore to blame. The conclusions of the Technical Secretariat's report have therefore been distorted.

Lie No. 7

Novichok was a Soviet invention and could have been produced only in Russia.

It should be remembered that Novichok is a name coined in the West for a group of chemical warfare agents that have been developed in many countries, including in Great Britain. The British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson confirmed in a recent interview that Great Britain has samples of this substance in a laboratory in Porton Down. Indeed, we have many questions for this laboratory. It would be interesting to find out how the laboratory determined that the Skripals were poisoned by the Novichok-type nerve gas. Any reasonable person knows that this can only be established if you have the precursor component with which to compare the chemical that was found. It turns out that the laboratory has stocks of Novichok and perhaps even antidotes that may have been used to treat the Skripals.

There has never been any research and development or experimental work on a programme with the title "Novichok". I repeat: there has been no programme under that name. During Soviet times, from the 1970s, not only Soviet but also British and American scientists were developing new kinds of nerve agents. That is how the notorious nerve gas, VX, was created. However, during the 1990s, after the collapse of the USSR, Western intelligence services brought a group of chemical scientists from Russia, along with their research papers. Specialists in the West set about carefully studying the research material, used it as the basis of their work in this field and achieved some success, which became known to the public.

We know very well that Novichok-type nerve agents have been produced in quite a number of countries. Unlike our Western partners, who always roll their eyes and say that they know something but that it is classified information, we take a different tack. We work with publicly available sources. Thus, on 1 December 2015, the United States Patent and Trademark Office asked the Russian patent agency to verify the patentability of a product invented by American researcher T. Rubin. Here is that document (shown on screen).

The document refers to the invention of a special bullet with a separate cavity for storing various types of toxic agents. When used, it has a lethal effect through the impact of the toxic substance on the human body. To put it simply, the ammunition falls within the scope of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The bullet works on the principle of binary components which interact with each other on impact. And on page 11 of the official United States document we read that at least one of the active substances that can be loaded into the bullet may be selected from various nerve agents, including the following: tabun, sarin, soman, cyclosarin, VG, VM, VR, VX, and [attention!] Novichok-type agents.

In other words, the document confirms that Novichok-type nerve agents have not only been produced in the United States but also patented as chemical weapons. This did not even happen such a long time ago. The patent is dated 1 December 2015.

In addition, a search for the keyword "Novichok" in the Google Patents online resource yields results for more than 140 patents issued by the United States connected to the use of and protection from exposure to the chemical warfare agent Novichok.

These are the hard facts, not idle talk, and this is our answer to those who shamelessly claim that the USSR and Russia possessed and produced Novichok-type nerve agents.

Lie No. 8

One of the victims, Yulia Skripal, a Russian citizen, has allegedly been avoiding contact with her relatives and has turned down Russian consular help.

The British authorities have been carefully shielding Yulia Skripal from the media and the public. Her whereabouts are unknown. Not only Russian representatives but even her relatives have been denied access to her (the British authorities refused her cousin Viktoria's application for an entry visa). She is unable to return to Russia for medical purposes and to undergo treatment.

These circumstances demonstrate that the Russian citizen Yulia Skripal is effectively being held hostage by the British authorities, forcibly detained on British soil and subjected to psychological pressure.

I have cited only a few examples of how the British authorities are spreading misinformation and outright lying. Further disclosures could be made, but I should

probably stop here. True to form, the British are not even considering retracting any of their claims, despite the fact that those claims are absolutely untenable.

I have no doubt that we are going to see more false information, pseudo leaks to the media and unscrupulous insults directed at us by British officials. No real evidence, however, will be offered.

Great Britain is demonstrating its obvious unwillingness to cooperate fully in the investigation of this murky affair. This convinces us that the British do not want the truth at all. They cannot allow it to come out into the open.

The Technical Secretariat report on the findings of British experts raises a number of questions and calls for further painstaking work, including by the British. All specialists understand that they can draw final conclusions only if they have before them the material of the chemical and spectral analysis from the samples mentioned earlier. But the Technical Secretariat provided this material only to London.

We wish to stress that Russia will not accept at face value any conclusions concerning the Skripal case until one simple condition has been met: Russian experts are granted access to the victims and to the OPCW sample results mentioned earlier, as well as to the full range of genuine information about this incident that is at London's disposal.

We have compelling reasons to believe that this is all a crude act of provocation by the British special services targeting the Russian Federation. If the British continue to refuse to cooperate with us, it will merely deepen our conviction that this is how it all stands.

Mr. Chairperson,

One cannot help but recall the saying that for some people, lies are not a way of justifying themselves but of protecting themselves. On 16 April, we heard another strange statement: G7 calls on Russia to respond to Great Britain's legitimate questions about the Skripal case. This statement can be considered as our response.

We would also like to receive answers from Britain to many specific questions asked by the Russian Federation in relation to the incident in Salisbury. We would also be grateful if G7 representatives could explain to us why their countries have unleashed a diplomatic war against Russia on the basis of false information.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

We request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the current extraordinary session of the OPCW Executive Council.

Annex III to the letter dated 19 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and Russian]

AIDE MEMOIRE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON ENHANCEMENT OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

ON THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC) BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

In connection to the continuing hysteria of the Western states, first and foremost the United States and the United Kingdom, around the "Skripal case" and accusations against Russia of the alleged use of chemical weapons, we note the following.

Russia has not produced and has not had any production facilities of any toxic agents apart from those which were declared by Russia to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1997. All of the stockpiles were declared by the Russian Federation, checked by the corresponding representatives of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, destroyed under the control of the TS inspectors, which monitored the destruction process on regular basis. Correspondingly, at the present time, there are no toxic agents in the stockpiles.

Given the "lapses" in memory of the main initiators of the abovementioned unfounded accusation of Russia, we would also like to highlight that the Soviet Union came forward with a number of initiatives on revealing its chemical warfare potential long before the CWC was opened for signature.

In April 1987, in Prague, the Soviet Union declared that the production of chemical weapons had been stopped (the United States produced binary chemical weapons until 1993). The USSR does not have chemical weapons outside its borders.

In October 1987, the participants of the negotiations at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva initiated a demonstration of samples of the Soviet chemical weapons. Based on this demonstration at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva, the Soviet Union distributed an official document with information on chemical munitions.

In May 1989, it was also declared that the USSR did not assist any country in development and production of chemical weapons, in construction or exploitation of facilities for its production or storage, did not supply chemical weapons abroad, strictly abided by the policy of non-deployment of chemical weapons outside of its territory. Nevertheless, following the initiative of a number of Western states, in 1990-1991 the storage sites of the artillery munitions of a group of Soviet troops in Germany and Poland were inspected for chemical weapons. Based on the results of the visits, it was established that, indeed, there were no chemical munitions. At the same time, Russia knew about the presence of the chemical weapons arsenal of the United States in Europe. However, on the assumption of good faith of the relations, Russia did not file a request.

In September 1989, the Soviet-American Wyoming Memorandum was signed as a measure of preparation for the CWC and of confidence in that both key states equally understand and commit to comply with the future Convention.

Under the Memorandum, there was a bilateral exchange of data on stockpiles of chemical weapons and storage sites of such weapons. In 1990–1992, right until the Convention was opened for signature in January 1993, in Paris, there was a series of visits to the Soviet (Russian) and American facilities.

There were no questions regarding the presence of any kind of undeclared stockpiles of chemical weapons and production facilities.

Russia was among the first to sign the Convention on January 13, 1993, thus committing, in accordance with the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of May 23, 1969 (Article 18), to "refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of a treaty".

QUESTIONS STARTED TO ARISE AFTER V. MIRZAYANOV MIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES

In the early 1990s, when the USSR collapsed and the Russian economy started experiencing difficulties, in Russia, there was a term coined — the "brain drain" towards the West, when certain scientists who had achieved well-known results in science went to other countries to improve their financial situation. V. Mirzayanov decided to do the same, but not by means of his own intellectual potential, but by means of "playing" on the supposed knowledge of the chemical warfare. It has been noted that his first publications did not contain any formulae connected to toxic substances. His first big monograph was published in Russian in the early 2000s. This publication contained a historical overview of his life. It also did not contain any formulae whatsoever, there were no methods of synthesis of toxic substances. This confirmed that Mirzayanov did not possess any real knowledge because at the scientific organization his responsibilities covered technical support of the work conducted. At the same time, in the early 1990s, a number of chemicals which could be placed within the category which Mirzayanov started mentioning later on were already known.

The following examples could also be mentioned. In the Czech Republic, scientists, professors J. Matousek and I. Macek in particular, were working on protection of the population in the conditions of a possible use of chemical weapons. These are the scientists that deserve respect. In their publications in 1994, they pointed out the existence of a whole range of chemicals precisely as potential threats from the point of view of protection against chemical weapons. The scientists demonstrated several dozens of such chemicals. The data regarding the chemicals is presented in the publications without any relation to Russia and all that is now happening in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The materials include data concerning the toxicology of these chemicals, correspondingly large structural formulae and other information.

The Convention was presented for signature by the states already in January of 1993. The Convention stipulates the procedures for introducing changes regarding the scheduled chemicals. However, any changes introduced into the Convention on that stage could have led to a delay of the start of its implementation. It was precisely for this reason that no action was taken by any state that had knowledge of such new chemicals.

THE NAME OF THE SET OF "NOVICHOK" COMPOUNDS WAS IN WIDE ACCESS AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THE REPORT BY THE HENRY L. STIMSON CENTER IN 1995, IN THE U.S.

The information about the structure of the family of organophosphorous compounds, which the author united under the name "Novichoks", were first presented in the second edition of the Handbook of Chemical and Biological Warfare

Agents by D. Hank Ellison, the United States. The handbook presents the structures of around sixty compounds which, according to the author, are related to the "Novichok" group. For every compound he provided an index in the American Society Chemical Abstract System classification, which demonstrates that they had been synthesized and registered in CAS database. In certain editions, some of the compounds did not have a registration in CAS.

The Spectra Database of the American Institute of Standards (NIST) in the 1998 version (NIST 98) included the information on the structure and mass-spectra of the representatives of the "Novichok" family, which, according to the report of the OPCW Technical Secretariat of April 12, 2018, was identified in the samples collected on the site of the incident in Salisbury. The database contained the affiliation, pointing to the fact that the spectrum of this compound was presented by the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center of the U.S. Army Research Development and Engineering Command. It should be noted that this fact also unambiguously indicates that this substance had been synthesized and subjected to a wide range of analyses.

The need to improve his financial situation forced V. Mirzayanov to cooperate with the abovementioned arsenal and prepare and release in 2008 a new publication (State Secrets, in English). It was precisely in connection with this book that the main question arose. In this book, for the first time after the 12 years of migration to the United States appeared a formula of a substance that fully corresponded to the spectral data presented by the Edgewood arsenal in 1998. Naturally, from the political point of view (otherwise he would not receive the dividends) V. Mirzayanov tied such a chemical to Russia. A legitimate question arises: if he knew all of that, why had not he written before? The answer is obvious: working only in technical support of research, he did not have the knowledge in the field of the real research. The data was provided to him by the Edgewood arsenal.

In 2009, this book was directed by the United States to the OPCW Technical Secretariat. The Scientific Advisory Board of this Organization studied this issue very closely. As a result, the Scientific Advisory Board came to the corresponding conclusion. It noted that "the topic of new toxic compounds that are not included in the schedules of chemicals... has been attracting increasing attention in the recent years, particularly among non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Although very little information has appeared in the public domain, there have been claims that a new class of nerve agents, known as "Novichoks", has been developed. In December 2008, a former defence scientist...claimed that the toxicity of certain "Novichok" agents may exceed that of VX"[1]. But at the same time, it was reported that there was no reliable data confirming that these new chemicals existed. This conclusion was not tied to any State Party to the Convention.

At the same time, the Scientific Advisory Board declared that every state has the right to come forward with an initiative if it has all of the necessary data to create a database of chemicals and introduce it into the CWC.

In the future, the materials of the Scientific Advisory Board were studied at the Review Conference of the Organization. No decision has been made.

IT IS EXACTLY HERE WHERE COMES THE KEY MOMENT, WHICH COULD BE CALLED "THE MOMENT OF TRUTH".

Subsequently, after V. Mirzayanov's book saw the light, in conjunction to it, in the publicly available scientific literature (by authors from the United States, Czech Republic, Italy, etc.) appeared numerous publications dedicated to research of the

[1] Paragraph 11.1 Report of the sixteenth session of the Scientific Advisory Board (document SAB-16/1 of April 6, 2011).

compounds belonging to the "Novichoks" family (the list of the publications on toxic organophosphorous chemicals, which do not fall within the scope of the CWC, is enclosed). What has to be taken into account is the circumstance that in order to conduct the research it was necessary to synthesize real samples of the substances.

The states conducting the research could have provided the necessary materials for introducing amendments to the Convention regarding the schedules of toxic chemicals and their precursors based on the Article XV. However, not a single state conducting the corresponding research has done it. Yet the list of sources continues to grow.

The question arises — why? Not interested in enhancing the Convention and the OPCW in general? In this connection, we would like the states whose specialists participate in such development to explain based on which Article of the Convention are they presently conducting such work?

In the current situation, the Government of the United Kingdom, without conducting any investigation, a priori accused Russia. In order to prevent the Russian specialists from having access to Sergey and Yulia Skripal, the British medical workers, as it is understood, put the Skripal father and daughter into an artificially induced coma, which made it possible to collect biochemical samples and manipulate the state of their health without ever consulting them.

It appears that the abovementioned accusations by the United Kingdom were based on the results of the work carried out, among others, by the Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Center of Excellence, created in the Czech Republic.

In this center, specialists from the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Poland and a number of other countries under the cover of the NATO block are conducting on the territory of the Czech Republic research and development of new toxic chemicals, which might be connected to the "Skripal case". In this context, the Russian Federation welcomes the decision of the President of the Czech Republic Mr. Milos Zeman to conduct a thorough investigation of the nature of the works conducted on the Czech soil.

Taking into account the presented facts, one can make the unequivocal conclusion that since the mid-1990s, the agents which a number of authors put into the category of chemicals under the name "Novichoks" became widespread in the Western countries and accessible to many foreign laboratories. In this connection, the statements by the United Kingdom and the United States regarding attributing these toxicants to the Russian Federation as the origin of their production appear to contradict the real substance of this problem.

According to a number of experts, disposing of the structural formulae and the synthesis schemes, any modern chemical laboratory with the necessary special equipment, level of protection, correspondingly qualified personnel can synthesize and conduct research into the "Novichok"-type substances. There can be no unique markers which could unequivocally point to the country that had produced the substance used against the Skripals.

In any case, such works constitute a gross violation of the Article 1 of the CWC, according to which it is prohibited to develop, acquire chemical weapons. The statements of the United Kingdom saying that the Skripals were subject to an attack with the use of a chemical warfare agent confirm the abovementioned violation. It is precisely why in the abovementioned report of April 12, 2018, the Technical Secretariat called the compound a "toxic chemical".

Moreover, the Article 1 of the Convention clearly states that every State Party to this Convention undertakes to never under any circumstances to transfer, directly or indirectly, chemical weapons to anyone. The publication of the Mirzayanov's book, as well as the publications by the Center in the Czech Republic facilitate transfer of knowledge about chemical weapons, and this is indirect transfer of chemical weapons.

Questions arise: why did the Government of the United States, in gross violation of the Convention, decide to publish this book? It would be interesting to know who will answer this question. We suppose that no one will because this is a clear and gross violation of the Article 1 of the CWC.

We remember the biological terrorist attack in the United States when active strains of anthrax were sent around in 2001.

Then, the United States immediately, although in a milder form, claimed there was a "Russian footprint". In the end, based on the results of the internal investigation, the United States established that the terrorist attack was carried out by a scientist of one of the military scientific institutions of the United States.

It is noteworthy that it was in 2001 when the OPCW Executive Council adopted the corresponding decision to join the efforts of the states in the fight against terrorist manifestations.

Considering the indicated facts of the development of toxic chemical substances in the world, as well as the suppression of evidence of the investigation by the United Kingdom, denial of consular access to the affected Russian citizens, the Russian Federation believes that the Russian citizens have been subjected to actions which in their nature resemble a terrorist attack with use of a toxic chemical substance. In connection to this, we believe it is necessary to conduct an investigation in accordance with the existing decisions of the OPCW Executive Council and the report of the Third Review Conference of the States Parties.

The United Kingdom, however, continues to unfoundedly accuse Russia of a gross violation of the Convention — illegal use of chemical weapons on the British territory. For such cases the Article IX of the CWC stipulates a clear algorithm of procedures related to consultations, cooperation and fact finding. During the 57th extraordinary session of the OPCW Executive Council on April 4 of this year, the Russian delegation proposed to the British side exactly this approach.

It is evident that there is a vital need to establish cooperation between Russia and the United Kingdom, as well as the OPCW TS in order to clarify the circumstances of this truly serious incident. Russia approaches with maximum sense of responsibility the matter of organizing the work in strict compliance with the CWC requirements.

Russia supports conducting a joint investigation, especially given that this case concerns the sphere of competence of the OPCW, and not just the interests of the United Kingdom. Such an investigation must be based on irrefutable facts and evidence in compliance with all of the existing international legal procedures and with the obligatory participation of the Russian side in this matter.

Considering the significant number of the scientific publications on toxic chemicals which pose a threat to the objectives of the CWC that have appeared over the last 20 years, the Russian Federation believes it is necessary to recommend the following: for the purposes of taking measures to enhance the CWC, the Director-General of the OPCW TS should prepare and introduce at the soonest OPCW Executive Council meeting, in accordance with the paragraph 5 of the Article XV of the Convention, a draft decision providing for the development of changes to the Annex on the schedules of chemicals.

Annex IV to the letter dated 19 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and Russian]

LIST of publications on toxic organophosphorous chemicals which do not fall within the scope of the CWC (the list is not exhaustive)

The analysis of the available scientific literature made it possible to establish that in foreign countries, after 1997, that is after the adoption of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the research into the highly toxic substances which do not fall within the scope of the schedules of chemicals of the Convention continues. It should be noted that the work concerns not just research of the substances but also development of means of their delivery. The list of the foreign publications in this field is provided below. This list is not exhaustive because more publications are being discovered and new publications continue to appear.

№	*Country*	*Year of publication*	*Publisher, city*	*Name of the publication, imprint*	*Comments*
1.	Czech Republic	2011	Monthly peer-reviewed chemical journal published by Czech Chemical Society	Halámek E, Kobliha Z. POTENCIÁLNÍ BOJOVÉ CHEMICKÉ LÁTKY. Chemicke Listy 2011; 105(5): p.323–333 "Potential Chemical Warfare"	The sections 12, 13 of this article present information concerning the research carried out in the USSR under the "Foliant" programme. Thus, the section 13 (p. 330–331) contains a number of organo-phosphorous structures and their synthesis schemes (scheme 9, 10).
2.	Czech Republic	2014	Scientific journal published by Multidisciplinary digital publishing institute (MDPI)	Pitschmann Vladimír, "Overall View of Chemical and Biochemical Weapons", Toxins, 2014, 6 (6), pp. 1761–1784, doi:10.3390/toxins 6061761	The scientific article provides a brief overview of the chemical war which reached its peak by the time the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction was signed. The pages 1765, 1769, 1770, 1773 of the article contain the information concerning the "Foliant" programme and the development of organophosphorous substances under this programme. The page 1769 contains the

№	Country	Year of publication	Publisher, city	Name of the publication, imprint	Comments
					reference numbers of the substances and their chemical names.
3.	USA	2015	Academic Press is an imprint of Elsevier, (225 Wyman Street, Waltham, MA 02451, USA)	Gupta, Ramesh C., ed. (2015), Handbook of Toxicology of Chemical Warfare Agents, Cambridge, MA: Academic Press, ISBN 978-0-128-00494-4	The pages 21, 339–340, 463, 524–526, 528, 1071, 1107 of the book contain the information concerning the "Foliant" programme and the development of organophosphorous substances under this programme. In particular, the page 340 contains various code names of substances and their possible chemical structures. The book (p. 463) looks into the possibility of using the substances developed under the "Foliant" programme as binary compositions. The material on p. 528, referencing literary sources, provides the information that the new substances developed in the USSR are 5–10 times more toxic than VX.
4.	USA	2004	Westview Press	Birstein, Vadim J. (2004), The Perversion Of Knowledge: The True Story of Soviet Science, Westview Press, ISBN 0-8133-4280-5	The book contains a brief overview of the development and creation of the "Novichok" substance, last names of the direct implementers, site of the research and development activity and other data. All of the information presented on this topic references Vil Mirzoyanov.
5.	USA	2007	Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, 233 Spring Street, New York, NY 10013, USA	Hoenig, Steven L. (2007), Compendium of Chemical Warfare Agents, Springer, ISBN 978-0-387-34626-7	The book focuses on the history of the development and creation of chemical weapons. The pages 78–88 of the book contain a whole range of organophosphorous compounds, their possible synthesis schemes, the

№	Country	Year of publication	Publisher, city	Name of the publication, imprint	Comments
					presumed code names of the compounds and the data on their possible biological activity.
6.	USA	2006	Anchor Books, New York	Tucker, Jonathon B. (2006), War of Nerves, New York: Anchor Books, ISBN 978-0-375-42229-4	The book focuses on the history of the creation and development of chemical weapons. The pages 184-185, 198–200, 214-216, 226–233 and 269–270 of the book contain the information concerning the work conducted in the USSR under the "Foliant" programme. The pp. 184-185, 197 contain materials concerning the development of the Novichok-type substances, presumed developers, enterprises that took part in the development process, possible code names of the substances obtained and the enterprises that produced these substances and their semi-products.
7.	USA	2008	CRC Press	Ellison, D. Hank (2008), Chemical and Biological Warfare Agents, (Second ed.), CRC Press, ISBN 978-0-849-31434-6	The book focuses on various classes of chemical and biological weapons. In particular, a large section of the book is devoted to the development of new organophosphorous substances under the "Foliant" program in the USSR. The pages 4–15, 37–42 of the book contain large volumes of information concerning the Novichok-series substances, hypothesize about the possible structure of these compounds, their toxicity and physical and chemical characteristics.

№	Country	Year of publication	Publisher, city	Name of the publication, imprint	Comments
8.	USA	2008	CRC Press	Kendall, Ronald J.; Presley, Steven M.; Austin, Galen P.; Smith, Philip N. (2008), Advances in Biological and Chemical Terrorism	The book focuses on various classes of chemical and biological weapons and the threat of their use for the purposes of terrorism. The pages 135-137 contain a brief section on the "Foliant" programme and the Novichok-series substances, without providing any chemical structures or names.
9.	USA	2015	CRC Press	Harry Salem, Sidney A. Katz, (2015), Inhalation Toxicology, (Third ed.)	The pages 493–499 of the book provide the data on the Novichok-series substances, studying their possible toxicity and presenting presumed structural formulae.
10.	USA	1998		Analytical base NIST 1998	Provides the structure of the substance A-234 and its mass-spectrum.
11.	UK	2014	Springer-Verlag London	Mahdi Balali-Mood, Basic and Clinical Toxicology of Organophosphorus Compounds, Springer-Verlag London, 2014,	The pages 14–16 provide the structural formulae under the code name "Novichok agents", the p. 17–18 present the mechanism of biological interaction.
12.	USA	2008	Outskirts Press: Parker, CO, USA	Mirzayanov, V.S. State Secrets: An Insider's Chronicle of the Russian Chemical Weapons Program.	The pages 142–145, 449-450 present the possible structural formulae and their code names
13.	Switzerland	2002	Journal of Fluorine Chemistry, a scientific journal	Cristopher M. Timperley, Journal of fluorine chemistry, 113 (2002) 65-78	The pages 65–78 present the data on the synthesis of bis(fluoralkyl) chlorophosphates of high purity, shows the possibility of using them in the synthesis of the corresponding fluorophosphonates.

№	Country	Year of publication	Publisher, city	Name of the publication, imprint	Comments
14.	Switzerland	2005	Journal of Fluorine Chemistry, a scientific journal	Cristopher M. Timperley, Journal of fluorine chemistry 1) 96, 1999, 95–100; 2) 104, 2000, 215–223; 3) 106, 2000, 43–52; 4) 106, 2000, 153–161; 5) 107, 2001, 155–158; 6) 109, 2001, 103–111; 7) 113, 2002, 111–122; 8) 119, 2003, 161–171; 9) 126, 2005, 892–901; 10) 126 (2005) 902–906.	The works focus on the synthesis of the fluoro-substituted OPCs of various structural types: phosphates, phosphonates, amidophosphates, halophosphates, as well as certain fluoridated phosphorothiolates, describing over 40 compounds.
15.	Czech Republic	1992	Collect. Chech. Chem. Commun., a scientific journal	Halamek E.,Kobliha Z., Collect. Chech. Chem. Commun. 57 (1992), 56-63.	The work focuses on the research of GV-type OPCs
16.	UK	2004	Phosphorus, Sulfur and Silicon and the Related Elements, a scientific journal	Halámek E, Kobliha Z, Hrabal R. Identification of the isomeric transformation product from 2-(dimethylamino) ethyl-(dimethyl phosphoramido)fluoridate Phosphorus, Sulfur and Silicon and the Related Elements, 179: 49-53, 2004	The page 51 contains the structure of the compound 2-(dimethylamino) ethyl-(dimethyl phosphoramido)fluoridate and the degradation products.
17.	USA	2015	US patent, in 2014, an application was made for a patent in the Russian Fedearion (RU 2014143420A)	Darren Rubin, US 9,200,877 B1	A new biologically active bullet for delivering biologically active substances and chemical weapons, including various toxic agents and Novichok-type agents

Annex V to the letter dated 19 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom

SALISBURY: A CLASSIFIED CASE

12 April 2018

Introduction

On 4 March 2018, Sergei and Yulia Skripal were reportedly poisoned with a nerve agent in Salisbury, Wiltshire. The UK government accused the Russian state of being responsible for the poisoning. Russia denied any involvement. The incident caused major international repercussions, bringing Russia-UK and Russia-West relations to a new low. Yet details of what happened remain unclear.

This paper seeks to summarize the sequence of events as well as to present crucial elements of Britain's and Russia's position.

I. Background: the Skripal family

For the reader's convenience, it is useful to begin with some background information on the individuals involved.

Sergei Viktorovich Skripal, 66 years, was born in Kiev and grew up in the Kaliningrad Region. He completed his education at the Zhdanov Military Engineering School in Kaliningrad and the Moscow Military Engineering Academy.

Sergei Skripal was a career officer at the Military Intelligence Directorate (GRU), the intelligence branch of the Soviet Defence Ministry. For some time, he was the director of the GRU Department of Personnel.

In 1995 Sergei Skripal was recruited by the Secret Intelligence Service of the United Kingdom (MI6). In 2004 he was arrested, and in 2006 convicted for espionage by the Moscow Regional Military Court under Article 275 of the Russian Criminal Code (high treason in the form of espionage). Sergei Skripal was sentenced to 13 years in a high-security detention facility and was stripped of his military rank (colonel) and decorations.

On 9 July 2010 Sergei Skripal was pardoned by the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev and was freed along with the three other imprisoned for espionage in the framework of a swap for the ten Russian citizens arrested in the United States.

After being pardoned, Mr Skripal moved to the United Kingdom and has resided in Salisbury, Wiltshire, while retaining his Russian citizenship. According to UK authorities, he has also obtained British citizenship.

Yulia Sergeyevna Skripal, 33 years, is a daughter of Sergei Skripal. She lives in Moscow. In 2008 Yulia Skripal graduated from the Moscow State Humanities University.

In 2010 she moved to the United Kingdom with her father, but returned to Moscow five years later. She came to Salisbury to visit her father occasionally.

Sergei and Yulia Skripal's living relatives include:

- **Elena Yakovlevna Skripal**, 89 years, Sergei's mother and Yulia's grandmother, and
- **Viktoria Valerievna Skripal**, 45 years, daughter of Sergei's deceased brother Valery and thus Sergei's niece, Yulia's cousin and Elena's granddaughter.

Elena and Viktoria reside together in Yaroslavl, a regional capital 250 km north-east of Moscow.

Media reports have mentioned more distant relatives living in "Siberia". There is no detailed information about them or their interest in the case under consideration.

II. The 4 March incident and initial reaction

On 5 March at 11:09 the Salisbury District Hospital announced on Twitter: "*[We are] currently dealing with a major incident involving a small number of casualties, with a multi-agency response*".

At **13:02** Wiltshire Police declared "*a major incident after it is suspected that two people have been exposed to an unknown substance in Salisbury*". According to the Police, they had received a call at **approx. 16:15 on 4 March** "*regarding concern for the welfare of a man and a woman*" in The Maltings shopping centre in Salisbury. They added: "*Both are currently in a critical condition. At this stage it is not yet clear if a crime has been committed [...] We do not believe there is any risk to the wider public*".

Towards the evening, the Police said that the two victims were "*a man aged in his 60s and a woman aged in her 30s*". "*The pair, who we believe are known to each other, did not have any visible injuries*". Several streets in central Salisbury, the Zizzi restaurant and the Bishop's Mill pub were cordoned off.

The same evening, BBC reported that the male victim was Sergei Skripal. It was later reported that the female victim was his daughter Yulia.

On 6 March the investigation was transferred to the **National Counter Terrorism Policing Network**, yet no terrorist incident was declared. The Police also announced that "*a small number of emergency services personnel, including some police officers and staff, were assessed immediately after the incident*".

The same day, the **Russian Embassy** in London sent a note verbale to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, inviting an official comment from the government on the incident with Mr and Ms Skripal, any information on their condition and the circumstances that led them to being hospitalised. The Embassy also invited British authorities "*to ensure maximum transparency of the investigation as a necessary condition of public trust in its outcomes*". The Embassy informed the FCO of the request it had received from Viktoria Skripal to provide information on the condition of her relatives.

Later that day, UK Foreign Secretary **Boris Johnson**, while responding to an urgent question in the House of Commons, said: "*Hon. Members will note the echoes of the death of Alexander Litvinenko in 2006. Although it would be wrong to prejudge the investigation, I can reassure the House that, should evidence emerge that implies state responsibility, Her Majesty's Government will respond appropriately and robustly [...] I say to governments around the world that no attempt to take innocent life on UK soil will go either unsanctioned or unpunished*". In a note verbale, the FCO advised the Russian Embassy that Mr Johnson's statement sets out the government position sought in the Russian note.

The same day, Russian President's Spokesman **Dmitry Peskov** said that Russia has no information on what had happened or possible causes of the "tragic situation". He added that Russia had received no requests but was always open to cooperation.

On 7 March Metropolitan Police said: "*Police are now in a position to confirm that their symptoms are a result of exposure to a* ***nerve agent****. Scientific tests by Government experts* ***have identified the specific nerve agent*** *used which will help identify the source but at this stage in a fast-paced investigation we will not comment further*". Judging by the Police requests to the public, the initial investigation focused on the Zizzi restaurant and the Bishop's Mill pub as the potential places of poisoning.

On 8 March UK Home Secretary **Amber Rudd** gave a statement on the investigation into the Salisbury incident. She said that the victims "*are understood to*

be Sergei and Yulia Skripal". "*Both remain unconscious, and in a critical but stable condition*". She also announced that a police officer (later identified at Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey) "*has also fallen seriously ill [...] his condition remains serious but stable, and he is conscious, talking and engaging*". She added that "*samples from the victims have been tested by experts at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory at Porton Down. [...] Forensic analysis has revealed the presence of a nerve agent, and the incident is therefore being treated as attempted murder. [...] I will not comment further on the nature of the nerve agent*". She also spoke against "the speculation around who was responsible" as the police should be allowed to carry on their investigation.

On 9 March Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said: "*If anyone is interested in Russia's assistance in any investigation [...] we will be prepared to consider such possibility, if we have the respective data. But to achieve that, you have to make contact in a professional manner through existing channels, rather than run to TV with baseless accusations*".

On 11 March the **Foreign Office** informed the Russian Embassy that "*Yulia Skripal remains in a critical, but stable condition in intensive care after being exposed to a nerve agent. As Sergei Skripal is a British citizen we are unable to provide information on his condition to the Embassy*".

On 12 March the Russian Ambassador, **Alexander Yakovenko, was summoned by Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson**. The Foreign Secretary said that the nerve agent used against Mr and Ms Skripal had been identified as "**A-234**" and that, according to the UK assessment, **it was highly likely that Russia was responsible for the attack**. He invited Russia to respond, before the end of the next day, whether this was a direct act by the Russian State or acknowledge that the Russian government had lost control of this nerve agent. He also demanded Russia to provide full and complete disclosure of its chemical weapons programme to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Later that day Prime Minister **Theresa May** made a statement in Parliament. She said: "*It is now clear that Mr Skripal and his daughter were poisoned with a* ***military-grade nerve agent of a type developed by Russia. It is part of a group of nerve agents known as Novichok****. Based on the positive identification of this chemical agent by world-leading experts at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory at Porton Down, our knowledge that Russia has previously produced this agent and would still be capable of doing so, Russia's record of conducting state-sponsored assassinations and our assessment that Russia views some defectors as legitimate targets for assassinations, the Government have concluded that it is highly likely that Russia was responsible for the act against Sergei and Yulia Skripal. There are, therefore, only two plausible explanations for what happened in Salisbury on 4 March: either this was a direct act by the Russian state against our country; or the Russian Government lost control of their potentially catastrophically damaging nerve agent and allowed it to get into the hands of others. [...] This action has happened against a backdrop of a well-established pattern of Russian state aggression*". She added: "***Should there be no credible response, we will conclude that this action amounts to an unlawful use of force by the Russian state against the United Kingdom****, and I will come back to this House to set out the full range of measures that we will take in response*".

On 13 March the **Russian Embassy** responded by a note verbale which said that "***the Russian Federation was not involved in any way in the incident that took place in Salisbury on 4 March***". The Embassy added: "*Given that the Foreign Secretary put forth quite serious accusations against Russia, the Embassy demands that* ***samples*** *of the chemical substance to which the British investigation is referring*

be provided to Russian experts for analysis within the framework of a joint investigation. Without that, all allegations by the British side are pointless. The Russian side also demands ***full information*** *on the conduct of the investigation, given that one of the victims is a Russian national. [...] In general, an impression is growing that the British Side is unwilling to cooperate with the Russian Side in investigating the crime. In case the British Side does not fulfil the above demands, the Russian Side will assume that the Salisbury incident is a blatant provocation by the British authorities aimed at discrediting Russia*".

The same day, **Foreign Minister Lavrov** said that rather than issuing a 24-hours ultimatum, **the UK could have engaged Russia under the procedure of Artile IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)** which foresees a reply to be given within 10 days: "*I assure you,* ***if the Convention procedures are fulfilled, the Russian Federation will comply with its obligations*** *and will reply to the request so made in the time prescribed*". He added that under those procedures, the requested party has the right to access to the substance in question in order to be able to analyze it. He stressed that Russia had immediately requested that possibility but that the UK had rejected the request.

On 14 March Ambassador Yakovenko was again summoned to the FCO. Director General for Consular and Security affairs Philip Barton handed over a note verbale and a list of **23 staff members of the Russian Embassy declared "persona non grata"** by the British side, who were to leave the country by 21 March, and informed of the decision to reduce the Embassy's military section to a single military attaché. He also pointed out that additional measures would be set out by the Prime Minister the same day.

In her statement to Parliament the **Prime Minister** said: "*The Russian Government have provided no credible explanation that could suggest that they lost control of their nerve agent, no explanation as to how this agent came to be used in the United Kingdom, and no explanation as to why Russia has an undeclared chemical weapons programme in contravention of international law. Instead it has treated the use of a military-grade nerve agent in Europe with sarcasm, contempt and defiance.*

There is no alternative conclusion other than that the Russian state was culpable *for the attempted murder of Mr Skripal and his daughter, and for threatening the lives of other British citizens in Salisbury, including Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey. This represents an unlawful use of force by the Russian state against the United Kingdom*".

The following measures in response were announced by Mrs May:

- to expel 23 Russian diplomats "identified as undeclared intelligence officers";
- to suspend all planned high-level contacts between the UK and Russia;
- to propose new legislative powers to harden defences against hostile state activity;
- to consider whether there is a need for new counter-espionage powers;
- to table an amendment to the Sanctions Bill to strengthen powers to impose sanctions in response to the violation of human rights;
- to make full use of existing powers to enhance efforts to monitor and track the intentions of those travelling to the UK;
- to freeze Russian State assets in case they may be used to threaten the life or property of UK nationals or residents;

– to deploy a range of tools from across the full breadth of the National Security apparatus in order to counter the threats of hostile state activity.

The same day, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation** issued a statement saying: "*The March 14 statement made by British Prime Minister Theresa May in Parliament on measures to "punish" Russia, under the false pretext of its alleged involvement in the poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter, constitutes an* ***unprecedented, flagrant provocation*** *that undermines the foundations of normal dialogue between our countries. We believe it is absolutely unacceptable and unworthy of the British Government to seek to further seriously aggravate relations in pursuit of its unseemly political ends, having announced a whole series of hostile measures, including the expulsion of 23 Russian diplomats from the country. Instead of completing its own investigation and using established international formats and instruments, including within the framework of the* ***Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons — in which we were prepared to cooperate*** *— the British Government opted for confrontation with Russia. Obviously, by investigating this incident in a unilateral, non-transparent way, the British Government is again seeking to launch a groundless anti-Russian campaign. Needless to say, our response measures will not be long in coming.*"

Again on 14 March, **Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov** confirmed that "*Moscow has informed London through diplomatic channels that Russia was not involved in the Salisbury poisoning*". He added: "*Moscow does not accept baseless accusations unsupported by any evidence, nor do we accept the language of ultimatums. We remain open for cooperation in investigating this crime, but unfortunately we do not see any mutual readiness of the British*".

Still on 14 March, at a **UN Security Council** briefing on the Salisbury incident, UK Chargé d'Affairs **Jonathan Allen** qualified the event as "***an unlawful use of force — a violation of article two of the United Nations charter***". Russia replied by saying that the issue by no means falls within the mandate of the Security Council and that all discussions are pointless until the OPCW gives its assessment of the Salisbury incident.

On 16 March Foreign Minister Lavrov said: "*Russia not only can, but does more [on the Salisbury incident] than anyone, including the UK. [...] We are awaiting an official request from the UK to launch CWC procedures. [...] The fact that they are categorically refusing to send a formal request [...] means that they realize that they have no formal ground to go along the legal path*". He said that if the UK doesn't want to work in the CWC framework, it can also trigger application of the European Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters. "***But the gist of the British rhetoric is that they are not obliged to prove anything to anyone***". Meanwhile, **Russia, even hypothetically, would have no motive** to commit such attacks on the eve of the presidential election and the FIFA World Cup. **Yet the British government could have a motive** to stage a provocation against Russia due to the difficult situation with Brexit and the desire to keep leading positions internationally. He added that, according to Western-published scientific papers, work on the substance that the UK calls "Novichok" is going on in the USA, the UK, the Czech Republic, Sweden.

On 17 March UK Ambassador UK to Russia **Laurie Bristow** was summoned to the Foreign Ministry, where he was handed a note stating that in response to the provocative actions of the British side and groundless accusations against the Russian Federation with regard to the incident in Salisbury the Russian side had taken the following decisions in response:

– 23 diplomatic staff of the UK Embassy in Moscow are declared "persona non grata" and are to leave Russia within a week.

- Taking into account the disparity in the number of the two countries' consular missions, the Russian Federation recalls its agreement on the opening and operation of the Consulate General of the United Kingdom in St Petersburg. Respective procedures will be followed in accordance with international legal practice.

- Due to the unregulated status of the British Council in the Russian Federation, its activities are terminated.

- The British side is warned that in case of further unfriendly actions against Russia, the Russian side reserves the right to take further retaliatory measures.

III. Reaction of UK's partners

On 15 March the leaders of France, Germany, the United States and the United Kingdom issued a joint statement sharing the British assessment that it was highly likely that Russia was responsible for the attack and that there is no plausible alternative explanation.

In the period between **12 and 28 March** Theresa May made telephone calls with the US President Donald Trump (twice), German Chancellor Angela Merkel (twice), French President Emmanuel Macron (twice), Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Luxembourg Xavier Bettel, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to discuss the Salisbury incident.

On 19 March the EU Foreign Affairs Council made a statement condemning the attack against Sergei and Yulia Skripal and expressing its unqualified solidarity with the UK and its support, including for the UK's efforts to bring those responsible for this crime to justice.

On 22 March the European Council published its conclusions on the Salisbury incident agreeing with the United Kingdom government's assessment that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation is responsible and that there is no plausible alternative explanation.

As a result, in total 150 staff members of Russian diplomatic missions in 28 countries and the Mission to NATO have been **expelled**. Those countries are: Albania (2 diplomats expelled), Australia (2), Belgium (1), Canada (4), Croatia (1), Czech Republic (3), Denmark (2), Estonia (1), Finalnd (1), France (4), Germany (4), Georgia (1), Hungary (1), Ireland (1), Italy (2), Latvia (1), Lithuania (3), Macedonia (1), Moldova (3), Montenegro (1), Netherlands (2), Norway (1), Poland (4), Romania (1), Spain (2), Sweden (1), Ukraine (13), United States (60), as well as NATO (10). Six EU countries did not expel diplomats but recalled their ambassadors to Russia for consultations.

Comments made by high officials of the countries concerned include the following:

- **Czech Republic President, Miloš Zeman**, said in an interview on 29 March: "*So far the UK has not presented any evidence. There are suspicions, but as you know, suspicions are not evidence. I understand the essence of the solidarity act, but I would like to see proof as well. [...] Listen, what does 'highly likely' mean? I would like to have on my desk if not direct, at least indirect evidence*". Czech Deputy Foreign Minister Jakub Dürr has been quoted as saying: "*When it comes to the UK position, we completely trust our British partner. You don't doubt your*

friend, especially when the argument is supported by a phrase like 'highly likely'".

- **Bulgaria's Prime Minister, Boyko Borissov**, said at a press conference on 30 March: "*Bulgaria has shown full solidarity with the United Kingdom by voting at the European Council [...] We are waiting for more evidence, if any exists, and for the moment we don't believe we have to expel Russian diplomats*".

- **Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister, Bartosz Cichocki**, was quoted by the Sunday Express on 8 April as saying: "*In our case, the depth of the UK's information wasn't critical because we had been observing patterns of Russian behaviour and what happened in Salisbury fitted into that pattern*".

On 26 March the **Russian Foreign Ministry** expressed strong protest in the wake of the decision taken by a number of EU and NATO member countries to expel Russian diplomats. This step was regarded as an unfriendly one that is not consistent with the goals and interests of establishing the underlying reasons and searching for the perpetrators of the incident that occurred in the town of Salisbury on 4 March. Russia reciprocated by a symmetrical expulsion of diplomats of the countries concerned.

On 30 March Ambassador Bristow was again summoned to the Russian Foreign Ministry, where he was handed a note of protest against the provocative and unfounded actions by the British side, which had orchestrated a groundless expulsion of Russian diplomats from a number of countries. The ambassador was informed that within a month, the British side must bring the total number of employees of UK missions in Russia to the same size as that of Russian missions in the UK.

IV. Further political and diplomatic exchanges

On 19 March Russian President Vladimir Putin said: "*I guess, any reasonable person realised that this is complete absurd and nonsense. For anybody in Russia to allow themselves such actions on the eve of the presidential election and the football World Cup? This is unthinkable". He added: "We are ready to cooperate. We said it at the very beginning. We are ready to participate in the necessary investigations, but this requires an interest from the other side, and that's what we don't see at this stage*".

On 26 March Theresa May once again spoke about "*a pattern of increasingly aggressive Russian behaviour attacking the international rules based system across our continent and beyond*" and called Russia "*a threat for the collective security of the UK and its allies*".

On 27 March Boris Johnson wrote in The Times that British allies expelled Russian officials because they shared the UK's view of the threat post by the Kremlin to their values and security.

In his Mansion House speech **on 28 March, Boris Johnson** praised the countries that had joined the UK in expelling Russian diplomats and referred to this as a sign of continued global engagement of Britain despite fears associated with Brexit.

On 28 March the Russian Embassy asked the Foreign Office to assist in arranging meetings with representatives of the Salisbury District Hospital, Metropolitan Police, Porton Down laboratory and the Official Solicitor. No reply has been received.

On 30 and 31 March the Russian Embassy sent notes verbales to the Foreign Office outlining 41 questions on the Skripal case that had been officially asked but remained unanswered. Most of these remain unanswered to this day.

On 3 April President Putin said: "*Of course, we are interested in a full-fledged investigation. We want access to that investigation and hope to receive the respective materials, as we are speaking of Russian citizens*".

On 5 April Russia convened a **UN Security Council** meeting to resume discussion of the Salisbury incident. Russian Ambassador Vasily Nebenzya pointed out numerous questions left unanswered by the UK Government.

On 6 April Ambassador Yakovenko addressed a personal letter to **Foreign Secretary Johnson** expressing dissatisfaction with the level of cooperation of the British side and **proposing to hold a meeting** to thoroughly discuss the situation regarding the Salisbury incident and the general state of Russia-UK relations. No reply has been received.

V. Medical issues

On 22 March Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey was discharged from hospital.

On 29 March Dr Christine Blanshard, Medical Director for Salisbury District Hospital, said: "*I'm pleased to be able to report an improvement in the condition of Yulia Skripal. She has responded well to treatment but continues to receive expert clinical care 24 hours a day*". The Hospital said **Ms Skripal is no longer in a critical condition**. Media reported that she had regained consciousness and was able to eat and talk.

On 5 April in a telephone conversation with Viktoria Skripal aired on Russian TV, **Yulia Skripal said**: "*Everything is fine, everything is solvable, **everybody is recovering**, everybody is alive, [Sergei Skripal] is fine, he is currently sleeping*". The same day, Metropolitan Police published a statement on behalf of Ms Skripal in which she said: "*I woke up over a week ago now and am glad to say my strength is growing daily*".

On 6 April the Hospital announced that **Sergei Skripal** had been "*responding well to treatment, improving rapidly and is **no longer in a critical condition***".

On 10 April Dr Blanshard announced **Yulia Skripal's discharge** from hospital. She said: "*While I won't go into great detail about the treatment we've been providing, I will say that nerve agents work by attaching themselves to a particular enzyme in the body which then stops the nerves from working properly. This results in symptoms such as sickness, hallucinations and confusion. Our job in treating the patients has been to stabilise them — ensuring that the patients could breathe and that blood could continue to circulate. We then needed to use a variety of different drugs to support the patients until they could create more enzymes to replace those affected by the poisoning. We also used specialised decontamination techniques to remove any residual toxins. Both patients have responded exceptionally well to the treatment we've been providing. But equally, both patients are at different stages in their recovery. Yulia has now been discharged from Salisbury District Hospital [...] **Her father has also made good progress**. On Friday I announced that he was no longer in a critical condition. Although he is recovering more slowly than Yulia, we hope that he too will be able to leave hospital in due course*".

On 11 April a statement was published by Metropolitan Police on behalf of Ms Skripal, saying: "*I have left my father in [the hospital's] care, and he is still seriously ill. I too am still suffering with the effects of the nerve agent used against me*". The

Russian Embassy questioned the authenticity of the statement, pointing, among other things, at the inconsistency between the phone conversation in which Yulia says to Viktoria that "everything is fine" with her and her father, and their health condition as described in the Metropolitan Police statement.

VI. Police investigation

On **17 March** Metropolitan Police made public the following sequence of Mr and Ms Skripal's movements prior to the incident:

> *"14.40hrs on Saturday, 3 March: Yulia arrives at Heathrow Airport on a flight from Russia.*
>
> *09.15hrs on Sunday, 4 March: Sergei's car is seen in the area of London Road, Churchill Way North and Wilton Road.*
>
> *13.30hrs: Sergei's car is seen being driven down Devizes Road, towards the town centre.*
>
> *13:40hrs: Sergei and Yulia arrive in Sainsbury's upper level car park at the Maltings. At some time after this, they go to the Bishops Mill Pub in the town centre.*
>
> *14.20hrs: They dine at Zizzi Restaurant.*
>
> *15:35hrs: They leave Zizzi Restaurant.*
>
> *16.15hrs: Emergency services receive a report from a member of the public and police arrive at the scene within minutes, where they find Sergei and Yulia extremely ill on a park bench near the restaurant".*

Since then, few details of the investigation have been announced officially, although quite a few of them have been reported by the media quoting "sources".

Several versions have been explored by the media as to how exactly the victims were exposed to the poison. These include:

- The Skripals could be poisoned by food or drink at the Zizzi restaurant or at the Bishop's Mill pub that they visited on 4 March 2018 (The Sun, 6 March, based on the fact that the two establishments were cordoned off).
- The Skripals could be sprayed with poison by attackers in the street (Daily Mail, 6 March, source: "Anti-terror police").
- The nerve agent could be planted in one of the personal items in Yulia Skripal's suitcase before she left Moscow for London. According to this theory the toxin was impregnated in an item of clothing or cosmetics or else in a gift that was opened in the house of Sergei Skripal in Salisbury, meaning Yulia Skripal was deliberately targeted to get at her father (The Telegraph, 15 March, source: "Senior sources in the intelligence agencies").
- The nerve agent could be planted in the air conditioner of the car of Skripals (Daily Mail, 19 March, source: "Security expert Philip Ingram").
- The Skripals could be poisoned through buckwheat that Yulia Skripal had asked her friend to buy and bring for her father, because she had forgotten to pick up the grocery gifts herself (The Sun, 1 April, source: "British investigators").

On 28 March the Police announced that "*at this point in our investigation, we believe the Skripals first came into contact with the nerve agent from their* ***front door***".

At the time of writing, the **door handle** version looks the primary one. It has been reported that the nerve agent, being a gel, could be smeared on the door handle so that Mr Skripal would be poisoned once he touched it. It then allegedly slowly penetrated his skin and Yulia's and caused its effects several hours after exposure.

It has also been reported that Mr and Ms Skripal's **mobile phones were switched off** for four hours in the morning of 4 March.

It has been officially confirmed that **pet animals of Mr Skripal are dead**. They allegedly remained in Mr Skripal's sealed house after the investigation began. Two guinea pigs allegedly died of starvation, while a cat was found in stressed condition and had to be euthanized. They were allegedly brought to the Porton Down laboratory and incinerated. It is unclear whether they had been tested for nerve agents. According to Viktoria Skripal, Sergei Skripal had two cats; the fate of the second cat is unknown. The death of the animals has been criticised by Russia as an example of cruelty, disregard for Mr Skripal's rights and destruction of potentially important evidence.

On 31 March Russia formally proposed a joint investigation into the Salisbury incident.

On 3 April a formal request for legal assistance was sent to the Home Office from the General Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation pursuant to a criminal investigation opened in Russia with regard to the attempted murder.

VII. OPCW

On 8 March the UK notified the OPCW Technical Secretariat of the incident in Salisbury. On 12 March Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson spoke to OPCW Director General Ahmet Uzumcu. According to UK authorities, the Technical Secretariat offered its assistance.

As mentioned above, on **13 March Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov** suggested that the **UK should engage Russia within the framework of the procedures of Article IX CWC**.

On 14 March, speaking at the OPCW Executive Council, UK Permanent Representative **Peter Wilson** said that the Salisubury attack represents a violation by Russia of the fundamental prohibition on the use of chemical weapons contained in Article 1 of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Reacting to the Russian proposal for the UK to use the procedure of Article IX CWC, Mr Wilson said that "***Article IX does not oblige states which are victims of chemical weapons to refrain from seeking rapid response to their immediate and urgent concerns***". The same day, at the UN Security Council, UK representative Jonathan Allen said that the summoning of the Russian Ambassador by the Foreign Secretary constituted the Article IX procedure.

On 14 March Prime Minister Theresa May sent a letter to Director-General of the OPCW Technical Secretariat Ahmet Uzumcu inviting the OPCW Technical Secretariat "to independently verify the analysis" of the British investigation into the Salisbury incident.

On 19 March the group of the OPCW experts reportedly arrived to the UK. On 22 March the Court of Protection authorized taking of biomedical samples from Mr and Ms Skripal for OPCW analysis.

On 21 March a briefing of high officials of the Russian Foreign, Defence and Industry Ministries was held in Moscow, with an aide-memoire circulated. The document reiterated Russia's readiness to work under Article IX CWC. With regard to the bilateral UK-OPCW process, it was said that "*Russia expects the OPCW to*

make an official detailed account of developments around the 'Skripal case'. We proceed from the understanding that the OPCW Technical Secretariat shall conduct a full-fledged independent investigation in accordance with all relevant provisions of the CWC". A number of technical questions were simultaneously addressed to the UK.

On 3 April President of Russia Vladimir Putin said that, according to international experts, about twenty countries in the world can manufacture substances in question. He confirmed the interest in a full-scale investigation, which Russia would like to have access to, and expressed hope to receive the relevant materials, because Russian citizens are involved.

On 3 April Chief executive of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) at Porton Down **Gary Aitkenhead** stated that his laboratory had identified the substance as a "military-grade nerve agent but has not been able to identify its origin". **On 4 April 2018** the Foreign Office deleted a tweet from 22 March 2018 about "the Russian origin" of this substance. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson was criticized for claiming in an earlier interview that Porton Down had assured him of the Russian origin of the nerve agent.

On 4 April at the request of Russia an Emergency session of the OPCW Executive Council was conducted. A draft decision sponsored by Russia, China and Iran suggested a joint investigation of the incident. The decision was supported by 6 votes, with 15 members voting against and 17 abstentions. Almost all the 15 members voting against the decision were US and UK's military allies.

At the time of writing, the OPCW intended to publish the summary of its conclusions following the analysis of Salisbury samples on **12 April**.

VIII. Consular aspects

In a note verbale of **14 March**, the **Russian Embassy demanded consular access to Sergei and Yulia Skripal**. The Embassy based its demand on the respective provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and the USSR-UK Consular Convention. Notably, Article 36, paragraph 1 (a) of the bilateral Convention stipulates that "*a consular officer shall be entitled [...] to communicate with, interview and advise a national of the sending State and may render him any assistance including, where necessary, arranging for aid and advice in legal matters*".

On **15 March** the **Foreign Office** responded by saying that consular access to Yulia Skripal "*is based on a number of considerations, including the risk to her health and the risk to others as a result of her condition, as well as the riks of contamination*". Consular access to Sergei Skripal and information on his condition was again denied citing his British citizenship.

On **16 March** the **Russian Embassy** qualified the decision of the British side not granting consular access as a violation of the consular conventions. The Embassy further requested immediate full medical report and up to date visual materials "*as clear evidence that this Russian citizen is safe and is well treated*".

On 20 March Foreign Secretary **Boris Johnson** wrote in an article: "*Sergei and Yulia Skripal have been in a coma since 4 March [...] They cannot give their consent to be photographed or receive visitors [...] It is not obvious that the Skripals, of all patients, would welcome a visit from Russian officials*".

On 22 March in a new note verbale, the Russian Embassy put a number of detailed questions on the medical condition of Mr and Ms Skripal, their treatment, and the reasons precluding consular access.

The same day, a judgment of the **Court of Protection** was published authorizing taking biomedical samples from Mr and Ms Skripal in the interests of the OPCW expert team. According to the judgment, a "litigation friend" had been appointed by UK authorities to act on behalf of Mr and Ms Skripal. The lawyer representing the litigation friend did not ask the Court to ensure consular notification of the proceedings and did not inform the Court of the interest in the case expressed by Viktoria Skripal. The Foreign Office informed the Russian Embassy of the appointment of the litigation friend on the same day, i.e. after the proceedings were over. On 28 March the Embassy expressed its protest over that inaction.

On 23 March the Foreign Office reiterated that access to Yulia Skripal "*is necessarily limited because of her condition*".

On 29 March after it was announced that Yulia Skripal is no longer in a critical condition, the Foreign Office informed the Embassy that they would "*notify Ms Skripal of your request for consular access and [...] ascertain her wishes in that regard*".

On 2 April the Russian Embassy requested the Foreign Office to provide assistance in allowing **Viktoria Skripal** to visit her uncle and cousin in Salisbury. The next day, the Embassy formally requested the UK Embassy in Moscow to issue a visa to Viktoria Skripal. On 4 April the Embassy asked the Foreign Office to designate a contact person who would coordinate practical issues during Viktoria Skripal's visit. In a further note verbale of 6 April, the Embassy confirmed its availability to offer Viktoria Skripal every assistance, should she need any, during her visit.

On 5 April Russian TV aired the recording of a telephone conversation between Yulia and Viktoria Skripal where they discussed the possibility of Viktoria's visit. The same evening, Metropolitan Police issued a **statement on behalf of Yulia Skripal**, saying "*I am sure you appreciate that the entire episode is somewhat disorientating, and I hope that you'll* ***respect my privacy*** *and that of my family during the period of my convalescence*".

On 6 April it became known that Viktoria Skripal was denied a visa, officially for not complying with UK immigration rules. At the same time, media quoted a "government source" according to which the visa was denied because "*it appears that the Russian state is trying to use Viktoria as a pawn*". In a note verbale, the Russian Embassy qualified this as a decision taken out of purely political considerations. The Embassy concluded that Mr and Ms Skripal, both reported as recovering, remain hidden from the public, media and consular officials, while the only relative who could reasonable expect to see them is kept out of the UK.

On 5 April the **Foreign Office informed the Embassy that "*The United Kingdom has complied fully with its international obligations* *in relation to the requests [...] for consular access [...] The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has, upon Ms Skripal regaining consciousness, conveyed to her the Embassy's offer of consular assistance.* ***Ms Skripal is now able to decide if and when she wishes to accept such assistance***". The Foreign Office also invited the Embassy to designate a consular officer as the contact point for Ms Skripal. The Embassy did so on the same day.

In further correspondence, the Russian Embassy again reiterated its disagreement with the statements on UK's compliance with the consular conventions, and demanded **verifiable** information on Mr and Ms Skripal's whereabouts, condition and wishes, including with regard to consular access.

On 11 April a statement was published by Metropolitan Police on behalf of Ms Skripal, saying: "*I have access to friends and family, and I have been made aware*

of my specific contacts at the Russian Embassy who have kindly offered me their assistance in any way they can. ***At the moment I do not wish to avail myself of their services***". The Russian Embassy questioned whether the statement actually belongs to Yulia, pointing at a number of inconsistencies, and demanded urgent proof that everything that is being done to Ms Skripal is done according to her free will.

IX. Summary of the official position of the British Government

The United Kingdom holds Russia responsible for the incident in Salisbury and considers it an unlawful use of force by the Russian state against the UK. According to the British officials, Sergei and Yulia Skripal were poisoned in Salisbury with a military-grade nerve agent of a type developed by Russia.

The main arguments used by the UK to support its case have been summarized by Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson in his article in the Sunday Times on 8 April, as follows:

"Our experts at Porton Down have identified the substance used against the Skripals as a "military grade" Novichok, a class of nerve agents developed by Russia.

In addition, the British government has information that within the last decade Russia has investigated ways of delivering nerve agents likely for assassination and as part of this programme has produced and stockpiled small quantities of Novichoks.

Moreover, Russia has an obvious motive for targeting Sergei Skripal. In the year that Skripal moved to Britain, President Putin made a televised threat that "traitors" would "kick the bucket" and "choke".

The fate of Alexander Litvinenko, murdered in London in 2006, demonstrates the Kremlin's willingness to kill someone in this country. The Russian Duma has actually passed a law that allows the assassination of "extremists" overseas.

Put the facts together and there is one conclusion: only the Russian state has the means, the motive and the record to carry out this crime".

X. Summary of the official position of the Russian Government

1. **Russia has nothing to do with the incident that took place in Salisbury on 4 March.**

2. The UK authorities have made quite serious accusations against Russia **without presenting any evidence**. Subsequent events have shown that no evidence of Russian involvement exists. The only concrete fact that the UK is putting forward is the identification of the substance used as "Novichok", "**a nerve agent developed by Russia**".

3. The UK has never made clear what it means by saying "developed by Russia". **Neither Russia nor the Soviet Union have ever developed an agent named "Novichok".** While Soviet scientists did work on new types of chemical poisons, the word "Novichok" was introduced in the West in mid-1990s to designate a series of new chemical agents developed there on the basis of information made available by Russian expat researchers. The British insistence to use the Russian word "Novichok" is an attempt to artificially link the substance to Russia.

Meanwhile, in a 2007 US-published handbook and a 2008 book by the defector chemist Vil Mirzayanov, detailed information on several dozen "Novichok"-type substances was published. Thereafter, this type of agents was described in numerous publications of US, Czech, Italian, Iranian, Indian researchers who, judging by their

works, did actually synthesize them. Given the broad scientific literature, it is safe to say that **any modern chemical laboratory is capable of synthesizing "Novichoks".**

4. Apart from that, the British "assessment" of Russia's responsibility is based on **unverifiable statements and artifical constructs**. The forcefulness with which the government is pressing these constructs only further illustrates the lack of facts.

a) The British government claims having "**information that within the last decade Russia has investigated ways of delivering nerve agents** likely for assassination and as part of this programme has produced and stockpiled small quantities of Novichoks".

Yet all production of chemical weapons in Russia stopped in 1992. The existing stockpiles, the largest in the world, were being destroyed for the following 25 years under strict control of the OPCW, of which the UK is an important member. **In September 2017, the OPCW certified the full destruction of Russia's chemical weapons**. It is not clear why the UK did not raise this issue in 2017, if it had information of Russia producing military-grade chemical agents in contravention of its obligations. It is also not clear what kind of information Britain possesses and how it has come to the conclusion regarding the purpose of the alleged production.

In this context, it is worth to recall that in his interviews, **Porton Down Chief Executive Gary Aitkenhead did not deny producting "Novichok"** at his facility.

b) The UK has pointed at an "**obvious motive**" for Russia targeting Sergei Skripal. They have quoted President Putin who allegedly made a "threat" that "traitors" would "kick the bucket" and "choke".

In fact, in the cited 2010 TV interview **President (then Prime Minister) Putin actually directly denied the policy to assassinate traitors**. Consider the transcript:

> *"Question: [...] According to memoirs, leaders of various countries signed orders to assassinate enemies of the state abroad. [...] Have you, as head of state, taken such decisions?*
>
> *Answer: [...] Russian special services do not use such methods. As regards traitors, they will kick the bucket themselves, I assure you. Take the recent case of treason, when a group of our illegals was exposed. You must understand that these are officers. The guy has betrayed his friends, his comrades in arms — these are people who have sacrificed all their lives to their Fatherland. Consider what it takes to learn a foreign language as if it was your mother tongue, to renounce relatives, not to be able to attend funerals of your loved ones. Think about it. You give your whole life to serving your Motherland, and then some animal betrays you. How will he live with it? How will he look into his children's eyes? Whatever thirty pieces of silver they may have received, they will choke on them, I assure you. To keep hiding for the rest of their lives, not to be able to see their loved ones — you know, whoever chooses such fate will regret about it".*

It is clear to any reader in good faith what Mr Putin meant.

Further, Britain seems to imply that Mr Skripal was such a threat to Russia so as to be considered an obvious target. This is hard to reconcile with the fact that after having served a part of his sentence, Mr Skripal was pardoned and allowed to leave Russia for the UK where he has been living in peace for 8 years.

c) The UK refers to a "**track record** of state-sponsored assassinations", citing notably the murder of Alexander Litvinenko in London in 2006. This allegedly "demonstrates the Kremlin's willingness to kill someone in this country".

In reality, **the murder of Alexander Litvinenko demonstrates Whitehall's willingness to classify key information** and put forward serious accusations unsupported by facts. The same script, but in a fast-forward mode, is being played this time.

d) British officials claim that the Russian Duma has passed **a law that allows the assassination of "extremists" overseas**. This is outright lie. **There is no such law in Russia**.

The closest Russia has is the 2006 law against terrorism that allows the President, with the agreement of the upper chamber of Parliament (a decision to be taken publicly), to send "formations of armed forces" to combat terrorists and their bases abroad. This is essentially the same procedure as the one prescribed by the Constitution for using troops beyond Russia's national territory. As one clearly sees, this has nothing to do with targeted killing. Invoking this law as a "confirmation" of Russia's policy reveals total lack of expertise, but also raises the question whether Mr Skripal has been engaged in any activities that the UK thinks Russia could conceivably consider as terrorist or extremist.

5. **The UK has not complied with its obligations under consular conventions**. Yulia Skripal is undisputedly a Russian citizen who has the right to contact with consular authorities, and consular authorities have the right to contact with her. Given all the circumstances, allegations of her unwillingness to receive consular assistance cannot be taken for granted and need to be verified. Sergei Skripal appears to be UK citizen, yet he has never forfeited Russian citizenship and the related rights. He is fully entitled to seek Russian consular assistance, and the Embassy is fully entitled to provide it.

6. **The legal basis of British actions in the OPCW is doubtful**. Instead of using the normal OPCW procedures whereby the UK could have engaged Russia directly or through the OPCW Executive Council (under Article IX CWC), the UK has chosen to cooperate bilaterally with the OPCW Technical Secretariat under an arrangement the details of which are unknown. In the OPCW, there is no such procedure as "verification of analysis".

7. Analysis of all circumstances shows that **UK authorities have embarked upon a policy of isolation of Mr and Ms Skripal from the public, concealment of important evidence and blocking an impartial and independent investigation**. The situation around the Skripals looks more and more like a forcible detention or imprisonment. If British authorities are interested in assuring the public that this is not the case, they must urgently provide tangible evidence.

Enclosure

Russia's requests and questions to the UK

Requests

Note Verbale of 6 March 2018:

1. To issue an official comment on the incident. *Done.*
2. To provide information concerning the health condition of Mr and Ms Skripal and on the circumstances that led them to being hospitalized. *Partially fulfilled.*
3. To take note of the request my Mr Skripal's niece, Viktoria Skripal, to be informed of their health condition. *Ignored.*

Note Verbale of 13 March 2018:

4. To provide samples of the chemical substance allegedly used. *Denied.*
5. To provide full information on the investigation. *Ignored.*

Note Verbale of 14 March 2018:

6. To enable consular access to Mr and Ms Skripal. *Denied.*

Note Verbale of 16 March 2018:

7. To provide a full medical report on the health condition of Ms Skripal. *Ignored.*
8. To provide up-to-date visual materials confirming that Ms Skripal is safe and well treated. *Ignored.*

Note Verbale of 31 March 2018:

9. To conduct a joint investigation of the Salisbury incident and to hold urgent consultations on this matter. *Ignored.*

Note Verbale of 2 April 2018:

10. To provide all necessary assistance to Viktoria Skripal, including by issuing her a visa and allowing her access to her relatives. *Denied.*

Note Verbale of 3 April 2018:

11. To provide legal assistance to the Russian investigative authorities who have opened a case regarding attempted murder. *No information.*

Note Verbale of 5 April 2018:

12. To forward contact details of consular officials to Yulia Skripal. *Allegedly fulfilled.*

Letter of 6 April 2018:

13. To have a meeting between the Ambassador and the Foreign Secretary. *No reply.*

Note Verbale of 9 April 2018:

14. To confirm or deny whether Mr and Ms Skripal are about to be resettled to a third country under new identities. *Ignored.*
15. To confirm or deny whether Mr Skripal's house will be demolished. *Ignored.*
16. To confirm or deny whether the alleged RAF-intercepted message from Syria formed part of information on the basis of which the decision was taken to expel Russian diplomats. *Ignored.*

Note Verbale of 10 April 2018:

17. To provide urgent proof that all actions in relation to Yulia Skripal are being taken in strict observance of her free will. *Ignored.*

18. To clarify conflicting reports as to whether OPCW experts directly took biomedical samples from Mr and Ms Skripal. *No reply from the UK. OPCW confirms taking samples.*

Note Verbale of 11 April 2018:

19. To explain how exactly the UK has complied with its obligations under consular conventions. *No reply so far.*

20. To confirm or deny whether Yulia Skripal has been moved to a "secure location", and to provide verifiable information on Mr and Ms Skripal's whereabouts, their health and wishes. *No reply so far.*

Questions

Note Verbale of 22 March 2018:

1. What is Mr and Ms Skripal's exact diagnosis and condition? *Partially answered by Salisbury District Hospital.*

2. What treatment are they receiving? *Partially answered by Salisbury District Hospital.*

3. Is that treatment the same as that provided to Sgt Nick Bailey? *No information.*

4. Why has the condition of Mr Bailey and Ms Skripal improved, while Mr Skripal remains in a critical condition? *No information.*

5. Did Mr Bailey, Mr Skripal and Ms Skripal receive antidotes? *No official reply. According to Porton Down Chief Executive, no antidote exists against the substance used.*

6. Which antidotes exactly were administered? *See 5 above.*

7. What information and medical effects led to the decision to administer antidotes? How had the medical staff identify which antidotes to use? *See 5 above.*

8. Why are there no photos/videos confirming that the Skripals are alive and at hospital? *No information.*

9. Did the Skripals agree on Salisbury CCTV footage to be shown on TV? *No information.*

10. If not, who gave the agreement on their behalf? *No information.*

11. Is that person also entitled to authorize the publication of photos/videos? *No information.*

12. Is that person also entitled to authorize consular access? *No information.*

13. What protection against chemical exposure is used by the medical staff? *No information.*

14. If consular access is impeded by the risk of exposure, can the same protection be used by a consular officer? *No information.*

Note Verbale of 26 March 2018:

15. Could the hastiness in administering antidotes aggravate the condition of Mr Bailey, Mr and Ms Skripal? *See 5 above.*

16. Where, how and by whom were blood samples collected from Mr and Ms Skripal? *No information from the UK. OPCW says their experts took samples.*

17. How was it documented? *No information from the UK.*

18. Who can certify that the data is credible? *No information from the UK.*

19. Was the chain of custody up to all the OPCW requirements when evidence was collected? *No information from the UK. OPCW says chain of custody has been respected.*

20. Which methods (spectral analysis and others) were used by the British side to identify, within such a remarkably short period of time, the type of the substance used? *No information.*

21. Had the British side possess a standard sample against which to test the substance? *No information.*

22. Where had that sample come from? *No information.*

23. How can the delayed action of the nerve agent be explained, given that it is a fast-acting substance by nature? *No information.*

24. The victims were allegedly poisoned in a pizzeria (in a car, at the airport, at home, according to other accounts). So what really happened? How come they were found in some unidentified time on a bench in the street? *No official reply. Police says the victims came into contact with the poison through the front door. No further details available.*

25. How do the hasty actions of the British side correlate with Scotland Yard's official statements that "the investigation is highly likely to take weeks or even months" to arrive at conclusions? *No information.*

Note Verbale of 28 March 2018:

26. Why have the authorities ignored the fact that Mr Skripal's niece has been enquiring of her uncle's and cousin's health? *No information.*

Note Verbale of 29 March 2018:

27. Is it true that Yulia Skripal has regained consciousness and can communicate, eat and drink? *Reply received.*

Note Verbale of 31 March 2018:

28. Why has Russia been denied consular access to the two Russian nationals, Sergei and Yulia Skripal, that have become crime victims in the British territory? *Reply unsatisfactory.*

29. What specific antidotes were administered to Mr and Ms Skripal, and in which form? How were those antidotes available for the medical staff on the site of the incident? *See 5 above.*

30. On what grounds has France been involved in technical cooperation with regard to the investigation of an incident in which Russian nationals had suffered? *No information from the UK.*

31. Has the United Kingdom informed the OPCW of France's involvement in the investigation? *No information from the UK.*

32. How is France relevant to the incident with two Russian nationals in the UK? *No information from the UK.*

33. What British procedural rules allow a foreign state to be involved in a domestic investigation? *No information from the UK.*

34. What evidence has been passed to France for studying and/or for a French investigation? *No information from the UK.*

35. Were French experts present when biological material was taken from Mr and Ms Skripal? *No information from the UK.*

36. Have French experts studied biologial material taken from Mr and Ms Skripal, and at which laboratories? *No information from the UK.*

37. Does the UK possess the results of the French investigation? *No information from the UK.*

38. Have the results of the French investigation been passed to the OPCW Technical Secretariat? *No information from the UK.*

39. On the basis of which characteristics ("markers") has it been ascertained that the substance used in Salisbury "originated from Russia"? *No official reply. Porton Down Chief Executive confirmed that the experts did not make that conclusion.*

40. Does the UK possess reference samples of the military-grade poisonous substance that British representatives identify as "Novichok"? *No information.*

41. Has the substance identified by British representatives as "Novichok" or analogous substances been researched, developed or produced in the UK? *No information.*

Note Verbale of 5 April 2018:

42. Were the animals of Mr Skripal (two cats and two guinea pigs) subject to chemical poisoning? What treatment are they receiving? *According to public statements, the animals are dead. No information on chemical poisoning.*

Note Verbale of 6 April 2018:

43. Were the animal remains tested for a toxic substance, which would constitute useful evidence? *No information.*

44. Why the animals have been disposed of when they could have constituted an important piece of evidence? *No information.*

Note Verbale of 6 April 2018:

45. What immigration rules has Ms Viktoria Skripal violated? *No information.*

46. What options are available to her should she wish to go ahead with her visit? *Reply received: Viktoria Skripal may submit a new visa application.*

Note Verbale of 10 April 2018:

47. What symptoms did Mr and Ms Skripal experience on admission to hospital? *No official reply.*